

## REMARKS

This Amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action dated September 21, 2005 in conjunction with the Request for Continued Examination submitted herewith. Applicants have amended Claim 17 and added new Claims 40-46. No new subject matter has been added to the Claims. A check is submitted herewith to cover the costs due in connection with this Amendment. Please charge Deposit Account No. 02-1818 for any insufficiency or credit for any overpayment in connection with this Amendment.

The Office Action rejected Claims 17-20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,894,717 to Yamashita et al ("Yamushita"). Applicants respectfully disagree with and traverse such rejection. These rejected Claims include, among other elements, an insert attachable to the outermost exterior surface of the rear portion of the mower deck, and this outermost exterior portion has a material director. Applicants submit that Yamushita's v-shaped wall portion 38 is attached to the inner portion of Yamushita's cutter housing, beyond reach of the discharge portion of Yamushita's cutter housing. Nonetheless, to advance the prosecution of this application, Applicants have submitted herewith, certain Claim amendments and new Claims to clarify the Claim language.

Specifically, amended Claim 17 (and Claims 18-20 and 41-43 which depend therefrom) are directed to a mower deck having, among other elements, a portion of a fastener that is movable between: (i) one position resulting in the insert being attached to the rear portion; and (ii) another position resulting in the insert being detached from the rear portion or detachable from the rear portion through hand manipulation of the insert. Yamushita does not disclose such a mower deck. Specifically, Yamushita does not disclose a portion of such a fastener which is movable between such positions having such results. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 17-20 and 41-43 are in condition for allowance.

New Claim 40 (and new Claims 44-46 which depend therefrom) are directed to a mower deck having a top surface, a cutting blade rotatably supported beneath the top surface and at least one sidewall extending downward from the top surface and forming a cutting chamber within which the blade rotates. The sidewall includes a front sidewall portion and a rear sidewall portion. The rear sidewall portion has a discharge wall which defines a discharge opening. Also, the rear sidewall portion has a material director with a first end adjacent to the rear

sidewall portion and a second end distanced from the rear sidewall portion. The material director is operable to guide a flow of material from the discharge opening to a destination beyond the second end of the material director. The rear sidewall portion includes a fastener support wall positioned adjacent to the second end of the material director. Also, the rear sidewall portion has an insert configured to: (i) be attached to the rear sidewall portion; and (ii) block the discharge opening when the insert is attached to the rear sidewall portion. In addition, the rear sidewall portion has at least one fastener operable to couple the insert to the fastener support wall. A portion of the fastener is configured to be positioned adjacent to the second end of the material director. Yamushita does not disclose such a mower deck. Specifically, Yamushita does not disclose such a fastener support wall positioned adjacent to the second end of such a material director, nor does Yamushita disclose such a portion of the fastener configured to be positioned adjacent to the second end of such a material director. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 40 and 44-46 are in condition for allowance.

An earnest endeavor has been made to place this application in condition for formal allowance and is courteously solicited. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Amendment, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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